

Guest Editorial

More than 100 years ago Charles Darwin was one of the first to recognize the value of a comparative approach to the study of human behavior. Since Darwin's most famous books '*On the Origin of Species*' and '*The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*', research has made great progress in understanding the nature of human behavior. This finds its expression in several scientific disciplines but human ethology and (more recently) evolutionary psychology have surely focused most on this topic by maintaining a more holistically and contemporary approach.

This current issue of *Neuroendocrinology Letters* presents a compilation of review articles from internationally renowned experts within the fields of human ethology and evolutionary psychology. It may initially be surprising that a scientific journal whose primary focus is on neuroendocrinology should pay so much attention to evolutionary approaches to the study of human behavior. However, such a focus is important for two reasons: (1) researchers are beginning more and more to integrate aspects from various scientific disciplines as they recognize that human behavior is too complex to be studied by using a reductionist approach, and (2) *Neuroendocrinology Letters* has taken up the challenge to open its doors to a more interdisciplinary approach (for example, note that many previous contributions to this journal are from the field of medicine).

It is a great honour that Prof. Fedor-Freybergh has invited us to take on the editorial work for this special issue of *Neuroendocrinology Letters*. The task was not an easy one as we aimed to maintain a broad spectrum of the widespread field. We were delighted when all of our colleagues whom we had invited to contribute agreed to share their considerable knowledge and expertise to this issue. At this stage we would like to thank all of them for supporting the idea of this special issue. All their contributions are considered not only to be state-of-the-art overviews but also a rich resource for students who are interested in the study of human behavior from ethological/evolutionary perspectives.

Investigating human behavior was also the lifework of two colleagues to whom this issue is dedicated: ZDENEK KLEIN and LINDA MEALEY. Both dedicated their lives and their careers to understand how humans behave the way they do and why, but unfortunately both left us too early. This issue is also regarded in memory of them, and it is

also to keep up their legacy by announcing the 'ZDENEK KLEIN AWARD' and the 'LINDA MEALEY LEGACY FUND'.

The ZDENEK KLEIN AWARD FOR HUMAN ETHOLOGY 2002 has been granted to Jaak Panksepp, Joseph R. Moskal, Jules B. Panksepp and Roger A Kroes for their paper '*Comparative Approaches in Evolutionary Psychology: Molecular Neuroscience Meets the Mind*'. The authors present a critical examination of basic principles in evolutionary psychology and suggest once more that only an integrative approach ('*neuroevolutionary psychobiology*') to the study of human behavior provides valuable insight. This article impressively demonstrates that (1) the approaches to, and principles of, the study of human behavior are always a matter of debate (this is the scientific process), and (2) research benefits from inter-disciplinarity. Although the authors within this issue provide their knowledge gained from several years of work, the contents should not only be regarded as facts but also to encourage further discussion and future research.

It is finally to express our thanks to the Editorial Board of Neuroendocrinology Letters, namely Peter Fedor-Freybergh for an excellent collaboration and Lili Maas for spending a lot of time providing her creative ideas to design this issue the way it is. We further acknowledge all the efforts that have been made by the Charles University in Prague with the introduction and organization of the ZDENEK KLEIN AWARD FOR HUMAN ETHOLOGY. We hope that all this will contribute to further raise the interest of people for the fascinating sciences of human ethology and evolutionary psychology.

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